The Canadian Student

by: Principal Sir J. W. Dawson

F5012
1891(?)
D278

LF2602

With kind regards
of the Lecturer.

(*McGill University, Montreal—Annual University Lecture—Session of* 1891–2.)

THE CANADIAN STUDENT.

By Principal Sir William Dawson, LL.D., F.R.S., &c.

With some interruptions rendered expedient by circumstances, I have devoted the university lecture for several years to topics connected with the history of the McGill endowment and the constitution of the university which has grown from it, and I propose now to complete the present series by referring to the students, whose education constitutes the object for which the university exists, and who are therefore in one respect the most important part of it. The subject is specially appropriate at a time when our number of students has reached 800, and if we reckon the students of the Normal school, which is really a professional college, and those in our affiliated colleges, must exceed a thousand. Since the revival of the university under its new charter in 1852, when the number of students was about 70, and these nearly all in the then well established faculty of medicine, the students have gradually increased in number, though with some fluctuations up to the present time, and it is an interesting and encouraging fact that their increase has been proportional to, and I believe to some extent determined by, the improvement of our means of instruction, whether in staff, appliances or buildings. The revival and reorganization of the faculty of arts in its new building of Burnside hall not only in four years doubled the number of students in that faculty, but indirectly caused an increase of students in medicine and law. We had determined when the students in arts should exceed fifty to take possession of the old college building, above Sherbrooke street, and this with the consequent completion and extension of the buildings and improvement of the grounds, caused a rapid increase of students. The Normal school, established in 1857, gave a stimulus to the faculty of arts, by connecting it with the school system of the province. The commencement of our school of engineering and its subsequent extension into a faculty of applied science not only added students in that faculty, but tended to the increase of the others. The provision of a better building and laboratories for the medical faculty has been accompanied with an increase of its already large classes. Our affiliated theological colleges have given us a great influx of new men, and the sudden and marked increase in the members of the applied science faculty in the present session is undoubtedly connected with the princely provision which has been made for its work. I have no doubt that the intended addition of a proper building, with adequate staff and appliances, as a home for our Donalda department will give a similar impetus to it; and the prospect of a new library, with suitable reading and study rooms, now opening to us through the liberality of another of our leading benefactors, will give a like and most desirable stimulus to our growth. Thus it seems proved that Canadian students naturally flock to the institution which provides best for their educational wants, and the lesson is that it is not by boasting or mere advertising that we can attract students, but by making substantial provision for their training, a conclusion which is at once creditable to the student and encouraging to his teachers and to educational benefactors. I would add here that the resort of so large numbers of the most promising young men and women from all parts of the Dominion to this city in quest of education imposes no small moral and social obligation on the citizens of Montreal. To the liberal aids given to the university for purposes of instruction they should add a kindly and generous hospitality, and I think the time has come when they should supplement the appliances for mental training with those for comfort and social life, in the form of a dining room and college halls.

Students are of different grades, from the infant opening its eyes on the world, to the aged man of science or literature, still anxious to learn new truths, and to

make of past conquests the vantage whence to snatch new victories. We must confine ourselves here to one out of these many stages, that of the students who have emerged from the tutelage of the school-room and entered on an academical course. Even of these there are many kinds—students in arts and professional students—and of the latter class there are students in theology, law, medicine, applied science and the art of teaching. What I am about to say should be applicable in some degree to all of these, and both to men and women; but more especially to those who seek collegiate halls for general culture in literature and science. For it must be borne in mind that if we can imagine a man or woman who comes to college merely to learn a trade or profession whereby to earn a subsistence, such a one is not in the highest sense a student. He is in some respects merely an apprentice, or would be so but for the necessity of some general culture imposed on him by the university. At the same time it is and has been recognized as the duty of universities to make such arrangements that this class of students, when aiming at the more learned and scientific professions, should not escape without some share of that general culture which makes the truly educated man and not the mere workman.

It is no doubt highly important to the welfare of every country that it should have well-trained professional men and artizans. So important indeed is this that every civilized nation should devote a large portion of its public funds to the provision of such training, and if in our time the part of the public money so devoted is unfortunately in most countries small compared with that spent on armaments and mere machinery of state, this is an extreme of folly which will cast upon us in the future the reproach of living in a comparatively dark and barbarous age. But however important this practical training, it bears no comparison with that liberal education which elevates the man as a whole, and which fits him for taking his place usefully and agreeably in private and public life, independently of his trade or business, and enables him to use for the best advantage his whole powers for good. It is to this that enlightened educational benefactors and statesmen should mainly direct their efforts, for by this will the real civilization of our country and of the world be best advanced. It was the object which the prescient founder of this university had in view when he devoted his estate to the foundation of a college for the higher education and the advancement of learning. But I do not mean that they should limit themselves to the narrower view of general education, but should include all that trains the observing powers, the memory, the eye and the hand, and this should, if possible, be preparatory to more strictly professional instruction. It has been our aim in McGill, however imperfectly attained, to make the education in our academical faculty that which will best fit for professional and public life, and to give opportunities for partial studies to those who are unable to take the full course.

In this last arrangement we have aimed to secure one form of that university extension which is now doing so much, more especially in England, and which it is hoped may bring some of the benefits of college education within reach of those who cannot attend our classes. It must, however, be borne in mind that university extension in its highest sense consists in the scattering of our graduates as centres of intelligence and educational movement throughout the Dominion; and in this connection I cannot but attach very great importance to the graduates of our theological colleges and to the trained teachers of the Normal school, who do so much to diffuse the benefits of college education throughout the elementary as well as the higher schools.

Here, and in the mother country as well, in time past general collegiate education has been cultivated to the exclusion of that which is technical or practically scientific. In one sense this was well, but the education was too narrow and its benefits were limited to a few. Therefore it was complained of and the pendulum swung in the opposite direction to a so-called practical and technical education. This has for some time been the fashion in the mother country and in the United States; but it may be carried too far; but, if so, a reaction will surely set in, and in the time on which the students of to-day are entering the man whose education is merely professional and not general may come to be regarded as an uneducated man; and a good academical course, capped by a degree in arts, will be considered a necessary qualification for business, for public life and for all the more important kinds of profes-

sional work. Besides this I feel sure that in the time coming academical education will continue to improve, that it will begin with such general instruction as every man and woman needs, and will then branch off into the various directions suited to different tastes, capacities and pursuits, in such a manner that every student shall find his true place and be so directed as to be fully fitted for that place. This is in truth the goal to which education should tend, and all the discussions respecting the relative merits of classical and scientific and modern subjects and general and technical subjects, are subordinate to this great principle. The difficulties in reaching this end in the present state of society are immense, and those of us whose lifelong effort it has been to prepare for securing it are often tempted to sit down in despair. But already the light dawns, and there are many men of clear vision who can see the coming day when it will no longer be necessary that so many of the men in every profession should be unfitted for it by natural or acquired defects, and that the fit men should be set aside in uncongenial places. The many educational experiments in progress in our time, some of them it is true very faulty and imperfect, all show at least the wish for better things, and the movements now in progress, so far as they are in the right direction, may be expected to advance at an accelerated rate. It is in view of all this that I would say a few words to students of the university who may live to enjoy something of the fruit of the seed which has been sown by those now passing away, and which we older men are not destined to taste. We may see the distant fields of the good land, but we shall not place our foot upon it.

To one who in the pilgrimage of life has left the ordinary student stage far behind, but is still himself a student, the position of the young man or woman who has left the strict control of school and home, and entered on the conscious, intelligent and independent work of preparation for the duties of life, is intensely interesting. It is connected with a thousand memories of the past, with thoughts of the present and of the future ; and in any earnest mind begets a great longing to aid those who are thus learning to steer their barque amidst the storms and currents of life.

We watch the young man or woman in this hopeful yet dangerous time that intervenes between childhood and manhood or womanhood, as we watch with breathless interest the runners who are poising themselves at the starting line ready to bound forward at the expected signal, or as we might watch the ranks of eager combatants advancing to storm some strong fortress. We know something of the issues for weal or woe that are bound up in their future, and would fain with prophetic vision penetrate to their destinies.

The youth thus preparing for the work of life is necessarily in some sense a student, whether at college or not. He must be a thinker, and that on the most momentous subjects. What are the pursuits he is to follow, what his future connections and associations, what the objects he is to work out for himself in life and how to be pursued, what are his chances in the struggle, how is he best to secure every advantage and escape every danger ? In view of such questions he might well be overwhelmed with doubt and hesitation. But youth is a time of enthusiasm and hopefulness. The world is before the young man, and in anticipation its difficulties fade away and its prizes seem easy of attainment. He may feel the want of the checks and guidance of home, but rejoices in new liberty. He may be diffident and modest, but has a bounding sense of strength and vitality, and better still, he may and should entertain a firm trust in God and a noble confidence in humanity, whether in himself or those with whom he may enter into friendly or profitable relations.

Collegiate life has an important place with reference to this great work of preparation. It gives the young man or woman a few years of thought and training and of companionship with higher minds before entering on the actual work of life ; a time of quiet study and preparation ; a time of severe culture and training ; a time for deciding with the best advantages on the paths to be pursued in the future. The benefit of this, properly used, is inestimable, and though it may delay that time to which every young man properly looks forward when he can earn his own subsistence and play an independent part in the world, it is well worth the sacrifice. Yet these advantages may be lost or thrown away. There are young men, happily very exceptional among Canadian students, who cast aside the higher aspirations which a student's life is fitted to encourage, who substitute for love

of knowledge a desire to gauge the depths of vice, whose heroes and standards for imitation are clever fools and men eminent in evil, who value the freedom of early manhood because it enables them to choose what is base and to reject and contemn what is good or noble; or who, if they fall short of this depth of folly, love to spend the precious days of youth in mere trifling and in frivolous amusements. There are still others who have no higher wish or object in entering college than to secure a trade or business in which they may earn more money or may have an easier life than in mere manual labor, and who would rather avoid than otherwise anything tending to make them more intelligent and better men. Such men lose what they can never regain, and that which no repentance can repair, for life is too short to remedy a misspent youth. Every hour of this precious time lost is a loss for ever.

This, happily, is not the usual case of the Canadian student. He may be, and generally is, to some extent, unaware of the value of the advantages within his reach. He may be no very frugal economist of time. He may indulge in some skepticism as to the use of what he learns. He may even entertain grave doubts and questionings as to the most assured beliefs and best established practices of his seniors, but, on the whole, he is a thinker and worker, and as such is in the right way ; and, in McGill at least, we have had no occasion to complain of his character or conduct.

The Canadian student is sometimes inclined to underrate his own powers and advantages as compared with those of students abroad. Distance lends much enchantment to our view of foreign institutions, and familiarity leads us to undervalue those nearer home. In mental and physical development I think the Canadian student does not occupy a position of inferiority. He may fall short in previous culture and opportunities of familiarity with high and matured civilization. He may suffer a little from the absence of old educational traditions. He has, however, as great scope for mental development and more freedom in its attainment, as well as more accessible openings for the use of the power he may acquire. On the whole, the balance is not against him, and he need not doom himself in anticipation to any position of inferiority to his confreres in any part of the world.

The most difficult problem in his case is, perhaps, the possible relation of the training he receives to the future developments of a new and ever-changing state of society ; and in this he must trust to that good sense and adaptability to circumstances that should be a result of any good system of education. The methods of education in any age, though in some sense in advance, are sure to be in very important respects behind the requirements of that age to come on which the student is to enter, and this especially in times of change and progress. The student must, therefore, after he leaves college, learn very much which, if educators were prophets, and students perfectly amenable to their guidance, he might have learned earlier and at less cost. On the other hand, in a young and growing civilization like ours, the course of college training is far removed from the ordinary tastes of the people, and there is too little public appreciation of its uses, and a tendency to draw young men away from it to enter at once and without such preparation into the business of life. In these circumstances we should, perhaps, rather be surprised that so many enter on a college course, more especially the course in arts ; and for this reason it is the duty of every university to hold out all legitimate inducements to intending students.

In the student days of those of us who were students in colonial colleges, say forty or fifty years ago, matters were very different from their present position. We had a severe and hard course of study, all the more severe that it was so narrow, with few options and few possibilities of attaining to honors or prizes. We had, however, on the other hand, few distractions. There was little light literature, the telegraph and daily press, the rapid movements of people on all sides, did not exist. We were not in a continual agitation of clubs, societies and games.

The modern student is in a very different position; in many respects better, in some, perhaps, worse. We have not arrived at the stage when, as in Germany, the student may select his course of studies for himself, nor even at the wide range of choice recently allowed in some of the universities of the United States, nor should we do so until the preparatory training of matriculants shall have been greatly advanced. Our idea is to give a general and uniform training in the earlier years, and when the student has attained to some knowledge of

himself and his probable course in life, to allow a wide range of options. There are thus in our present system many roads open to the student, and I would desire to give him some suggestions as to what he may best do in those cases where the choice is left to himself.

I may say frankly to him that he will not find it to his advantage to follow the advice of every one who may advance claims to superior knowledge. In our time nearly every man of any education thinks himself qualified to be an educational reformer or, what is perhaps quite as troublesome, an educational conservative. One tells us that we must have nothing but training—another that we must have nothing but what is practical—one that the time-honored narrowness of the curriculum of our ancestors is the acme of perfection—another that everything ought to be abandoned for the new sciences and literature. One raves of the conflict of various studies and of the distraction of mind and injury to health which it causes; another inveighs on the narrow pedantry which crams men with a few obsolete subjects. One tells us that professorial lectures are useless and that reading and practical work are everything; another knows that the essence of education consists in the direct influence of educated minds on the student. If the student is to settle all these difficulties for himself he may become gray-haired before he begins his educational course. On the other hand it is not advisable that he should follow implicitly and at once his own impulses. What is he to think or to do? There are a few common-sense reflections which may be of use in the matter. One is that while the course of studies fixed by usage or by college regulations may not be absolutely the best possible, or that which is adapted for every kind of mind, it is probably one that has shaken itself into shape by long use, and which may be the best attainable relatively to the means at hand, and the work that can be roughly done for many kinds of minds thrown together in a college class. This may reconcile the student to some things, the reason and fitness of which may not be quite apparent. Besides, whatever may be the demerits of the established course, it is in this alone that he can have the full benefit of competition with others, and can avoid the tendency to desultory and uncertain study. In looking back on my own student life and in that of those over whom I have had influence, I have had occasion to be more and more impressed with the importance of this.

Another consideration is that, up to a certain point, the studies that a young man may most dislike may be the best for him, because best fitted to train the weaker points of his mental organization. No man starts with a perfectly balanced mind, and the special bias which he may have may not be the best. Again, it is not desirable that men should be allowed to run at once into their chosen specialties without some previous general ground work. I can myself remember how I was held back and tied to studies which I would gladly have escaped, and yet I have had reason to believe that, however agreeable for the time, such escape would have been all the worse for me.

Still another consideration is that no man can be absolutely certain which of the departments of literature or science he is required to study may be most useful to him in after life It is true no professor or combination of professors can certainly predict this; but for that very reason it is well that the young man should lay a foundation of some breadth, even if he should subsequently build only on certain parts of it. The rain falls on the barren road as well as on the fertile field, and so it must be to some extent with education. It is quite certain that many things taught in college must be quite lost sight of in after life, yet the discipline which they give remains, and few of us fully know how much of our present success and usefulness may be due to the residue of those half-forgotten studies; while we do know that many of them, lying like almost extinguished embers, have suddenly flashed up to aid or to guide us in some difficult part of our career.

These thoughts should induce the student to bend his neck as patiently as he can to the yoke which may be laid upon him and to submit to the rules which prescribe his course of study and the conditions under which he can pass examinations, gain prizes, or attain to degrees and honours; while these conditions and restrictions are themselves parts of his training, for he who would rule must learn to serve. But they do not oblige him to become an unreasoning machine, or to forego the exercise of his own judgment. On the contrary, there is the most ample scope for this. And here, also, I may ven-

ture to give some hints. Do not limit yourselves merely to the consideration of what will pay in the examinations, or will be profitable as a means ot winning college prizes or honours. This is, after all, a small ambition, and you should look beyond it to the active work of life, and to the higher object of the best training for yourselves. You should bear in mind that those who know best regard these compulsions and stimuli of college life merely as a rude means of promoting a diligence which in the highest style of minds would be secured by nobler motives. It should be understood that the gaining of a prize or medal or honour parchment, or the applause of a crowded convocation hall ought not to be the highest meed of the student. College honours, such as they are, are only an index of powers applicable to nobler uses in the future life of their winner. At least it is only in so far as they have this character that they are of real value, and they should be of this character in any well contrived course of study.

Examinations, and especially competitive examinations, are regarded with much faith in our time. They will be less trusted in the age that is coming, that is if it can devise better means of securing steady application and accurate learning. They tend too much to that "cram" which has been truly defined as the partaking of food without previous appetite or subsequent digestion. It is of the nature of examinations, in order that their results may be precise, and that they may suit different kinds of students, to be always a little behind the knowledge of the age, and to give too little encouragement to the best and most advanced teachers. This consideration is leading scientific men, more especially, to entertain grave doubts as to the expediency of the establishment of those great examining universities which bring together the students of different institutions, and lay them all on the procrustean bed of a uniform examination, not conducted by their own teachers. It is being discovered, as indeed a little higher insight might have predicted, that this must lead rather to a Chinese uniformity and stagnation than to rapid progress in literature or science. For this reason I would advise the student in deciding as to any special or honour course, to be influenced not so much by the immediate prospect of college advantage as by an enlightened estimate of his own powers, and by a regard to his future prospects. The knowledge of himself is one of the best possible acquirements, and should be one of his great aims in the early years of his student life. Perhaps no gain is greater to the young man than the self-knowledge which comes as a natural result of the effort to grasp a considerable range of varied study and to compete with minds of various degrees of power. If nothing else were secured by college life, this would be worth its cost. Once gained, it gives a confidenee of the highest value, and a diffidence of equal value; above all, it gives the best practical guidance as to the line of study and of pursuit which it will be wisest to follow. Were this much of education generally attained, there would be fewer misplaced men.

In throwing yourselves into any special line of study with reference to professional employment, do not fear the result, if you are in the path marked out by your powers and tendencies. We hear constantly, even in this land of growth and "elbow-room," of some professions and occupations being overstocked, or being less inviting than others; but all are good for the best men. There is always room at the top. The crowd is around the bottom. A man may do well in any profession, provided he loves it, and is well suited for it by nature and training. It is true that the enthusiasm and hopefulness of youth may often suggest courses that may seem chimerical to the colder judgment of age; but all wise men have much respect for that noble, if sometimes wild and misguided earnestness and originality of thought and aim which mark the man of genius and power, and which, if they run in channels not immoral, will produce better fruits than the tame and listless plodding of mere mediocrity in some of the ordinary and usual lines of business or professional life. Not that we should despise the man of mediocrity. The world largely depends on such for what the genius of specialists could not give. But the great evil is when the man of medium gifts thinks himself a genius, or when the man of unusual gifts fails to recognize and use the powers for good which God has given him. It is one great mission of a good educational system to give guidance as to these points. I may be permitted here to refer to my own somewhat erratic experience. When I was a college student there was no natural science

as an imperative part of education; but circumstances gave me a strong bias in that direction. I turned with dislike from the ordinary avenues of professional life, and on completing my academical course spent two years in special science studies in Edinburgh, then the best school of that kind accessible. It is true that in the circumstances of British America at that time I could find no professional work in the departments for which I had qualified myself, and was obliged eventually to enter on educational pursuits and to resign to my students what I would have gladly done myself. This may have been well for me, but I would not advise many young men to follow the example. Even now, in Canada, it is easy to commit the great sin of being a little in advance of your age; but in almost any legitimate pursuit, however few may seem its opportunities, you may achieve success, if you have weighed your own powers and capabilities, and have the determination to persevere.

There is one part of the student's life which is especially his own—his vacations. How blessed a thing it is to find oneself free from stated tasks and daily studies, and professorial control, and to expatiate at will in the luxury of the long vacation. It is a type of that final emancipation for which the young man ever longs and of his being launched as a free voyager on the sea of life. But even as that great plunge is only the beginning of a voyage which may end in rocks and quicksands, or carry precious freight to the haven of futurity, so is the vacation a time which tries of what stuff the man is made, and which gives the opporunity for an education of its own. Is the student jaded with mental toil, he may enjoy repose and at the same time bring back the ruddy current of health to his veins in country or seaside air. If tired with lonely and monastic life in lodgings, he may enjoy the social amenities of home. If he possess the means, he may visit foreign lands and acquaint himself with the many ways and minds of various men, and study their arts and their manners and the products of the regions they inhabit. If impecunious, or feeling the want of business habits, he may throw himself into some kind of active work, gaining practical strength and professional experience and means to pursue his further education. If his tastes are scientific, he may pursue in nature or by actual experiment some of the subjects he has been studying in a less practical way in college. If he limits his view to the more immediate future he may study the subjects in which he may have found himself weak, or may prepare for some competitive examination in the next college session. Lastly, with or without any of these pursuits, he may become his own tutor and may prescribe for himself some agreeable and profitable course of literature which may bring him into familiar intercourse with the great writers of his own and other times, and may deepen and widen his mental and moral culture as much as anything that occupies his attention when engaged in his regular studies. The vacations are in truth the opportunity of the student for general literature, and on this subject it is well to give one needed caution. In our time the deluge of light and poor literature almost submerges all that is worth study. It was not so in the student days of those who are now old. Then there was less literature, but this was of a more solid class. Now the tendency is too much to read flashy and pretentious articles rather than more serious works, and to neglect the great masters of thought and expression for writers of a merely ephemeral kind. The student should avoid this tendency. Works of fiction it is useless to read, except to learn something of their character and style; and on any subject which deserves study it is well to have the guidance of the best and most original thinkers, and of those who can most clearly and elegantly express what they know.

I have not in this been giving advice which I have been unwilling to take myself. I well remember how, in student days, I was able in those times of comparative relaxation to gain some knowledge of languages not included in the regular college course, to read much in history and general literature, to take lessons in drawing, elocution and other useful arts, to make collections of plants, animals and fossils. I learned in this way what is, perhaps, the most important of all practical lessons—that variety of employment is equivalent to rest—a lesson which I would commend to all Canadian students. When you are wearied with one kind of study or work, it is often a much greater relief to turn to another of a different character than to sink into absolute repose.

In older countries, where men are more

limited to narrow specialties, this truth may be of less consequence, but it is all important here. We should not forget, however, that some of the most eminent of the great ornaments of our age in the mother country are distinguished examples of this happy power of turning at once from the duties and conflicts of public life to the amenities of literature and science. The habit of mind and body, which enables a man, after toiling with earnestness at one pursuit, to turn with promptness and vigor to another, may be to some extent constitutional ; but it may be cultivated and encouraged, and it is essential to the highest usefulness and the highest enjoyment of life. It makes all the difference between the man who, when his daily task is finished, sinks out of sight into a useless lethargy, and the man who only turns with fresh appetite and energy to some new study or enterprise. Cultivate this power as one of the best means to success, not only in college life, but in the work of our age and country, where every man must play many parts in order that he may discharge his duty well. This is, perhaps, after all, the best answer to the often urged objection to the variety and scope of our modern school and college work. It may, in some cases, fail to teach this useful versatility to which I have referred ; but where it succeeds the results are vastly better than those of a more narrow course.

The length of our vacations is often objected to, and there can be no doubt that many students would be benefited by summer sessions. These have been introduced in professional faculties, and as demand develops itself may be held in the faculty of arts as well.

Not only the vacations but, in the session itself, the several college societies are part of the special and independent province of the student. As representing his spontaneous efforts on behalf of his own training in matters not covered by the college course, they have an intrinsic value of their own, and are directly conducive to the preparation of the student for active life. While recognizing the great value of all the societies, whether literary, scientific, professional or athletic, I confess that in a university of non-denominational character like McGill, I attach very much importance to the Young Men's Christian association and the Young Women's Christian association, which have developed the higher spiritual life of our students, and have been eminently conducive to an elevated tone in our whole work.

We may perhaps, without undue presumption, look at the subjects I have noticed in the light of the probable future. The current of the world's history is like that of one of our great rivers. For a time it flows on deep and smooth and still, but anon it comes to some rocky ledge over which it throws itself in fierce and boiling rapids. If I am not mistaken, the time of peace and quiet, in which the political and social systems of Europe and America, their arts, their trade and their financial arrangements have attained their present forms, are approaching their end. We seem to have entered on a time of conflict of nations, races and classes, in which neither the arts of peace, nor professional skill, nor accumulated capital will reckon for much, but in which personal power, energy and culture will be the most valuable possessions. If in our corner of the world the English race is to hold its own and escape extinction, this will depend largely on broad and liberal education fitting both men and women for every contingency which in God's good providence may arise. But in view of such times of conflict, and while animated by a true and enlightened patriotism, and prepared to defend our own country and institutions against all attacks, we should learn to think not merely of our province, not merely of the great and growing Dominion to which it belongs, not merely of that great Empire with which we are connected, and which we hope is destined ere long to consolidate its wide-spread domains in one mighty federation. Even this we should regard in its relations to the interests of the world as a whole, and in connection with the counsels of God Himself, who enables us to work with Him and to penetrate to some extent His great plans for the world and for the universe, for time and for eternity.

It is time to close, while I have but entered on the subject of which I undertook to speak ; and my last words shall be : Live in the future as well as in the present. You cannot judge now of the possibilities or requirements of the time to come. Be armed, therefore, for all possibilities. This you can only be by seizing vigorously all opportunities. But whatever the future may be, you may be its heirs in this life and that which is to come, and that future belongs not to the seen, which is temporal, but to the unseen, which is eternal, and is in the hand of Him who alone knows the end from the beginning, and who alone can enable us to perform our part well in the present, through faith in His beloved Son our Saviour, and through the indwelling of His Holy Spirit.